るろうに剣心
けんしん
めいじけんかくろまんたん
—明治剣客浪漫譚—
和月伸宏
伸宏
和月

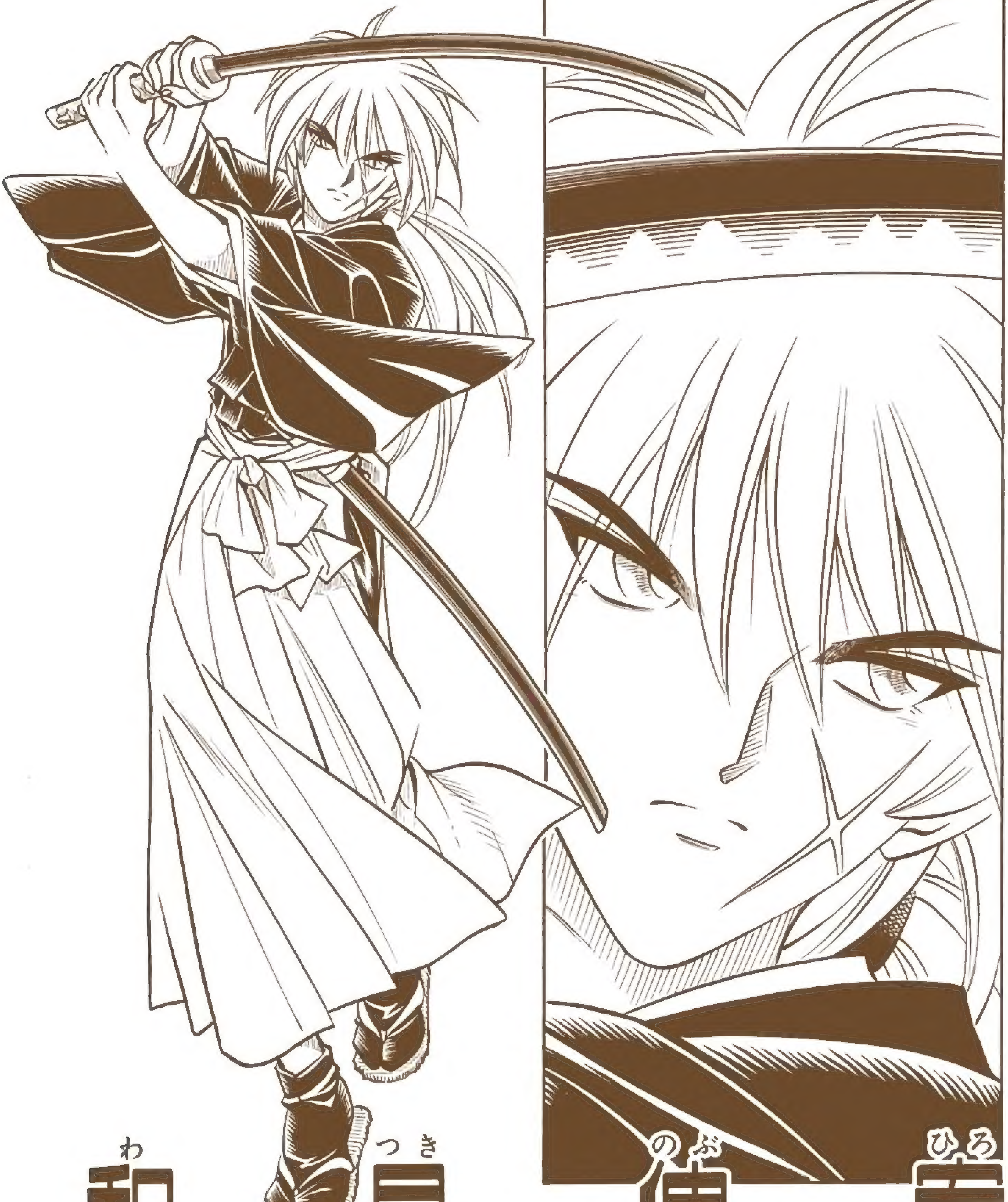
★この作品はフィクションです。実在の人物・団体・事件などには、いっさい関係ありません。著者カラー原画に加え、著者の原画をもとに集英社でデジタル彩色を行った特別編集版です。

JUMP COMICS

るろうに剣心

—明治剣客浪漫譚—

巻之十七　決着—時代の選びし者—



和月伸宏

登場人物紹介

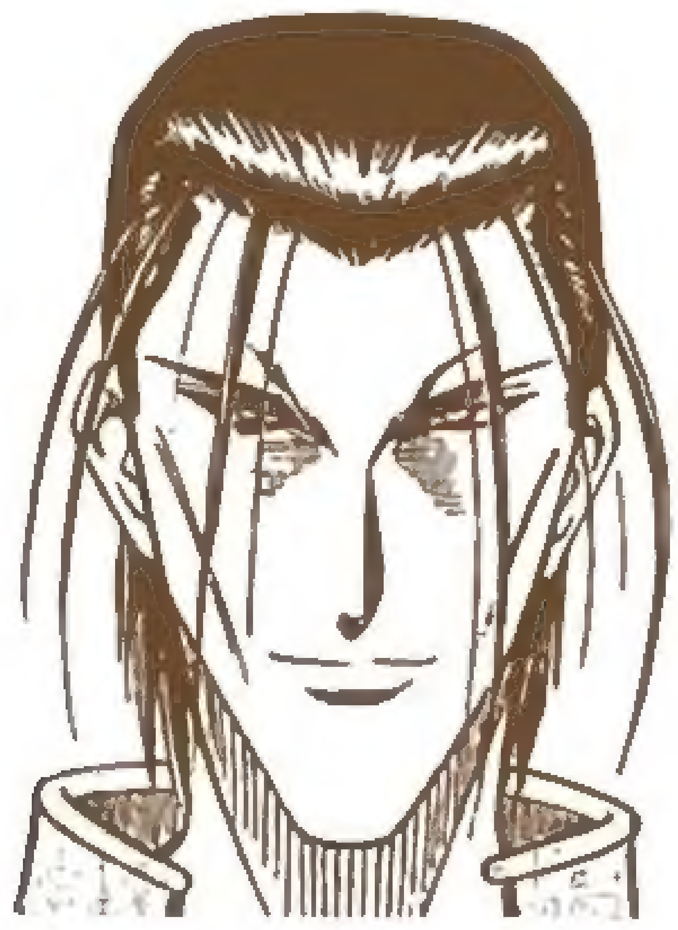
緋村剣心（人斬り抜刀斎）

相楽左之助

神谷薫

佐渡島方治

斎藤一

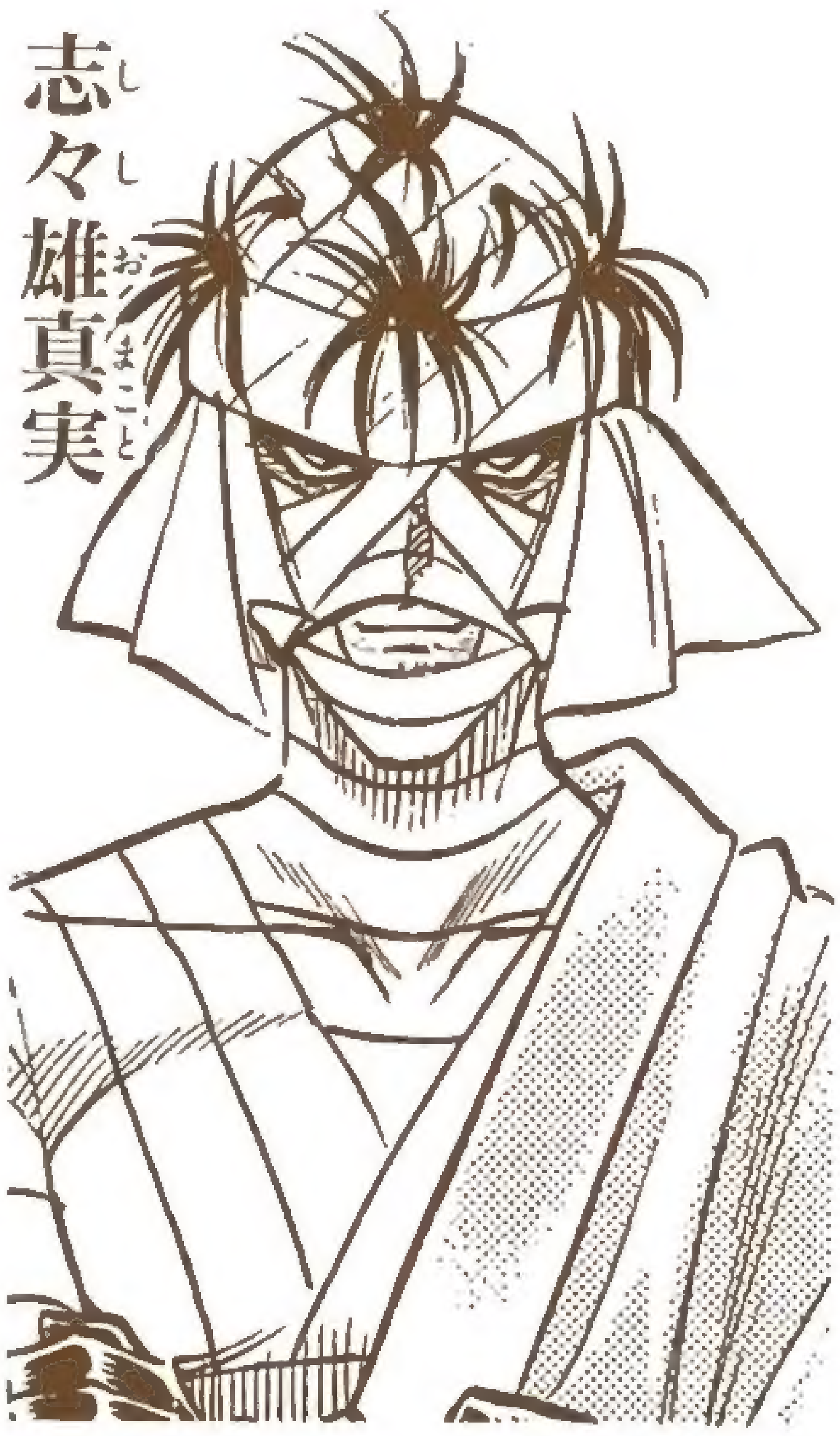


駒形由美

四乃森蒼紫

るろうに剣心

和月伸宏



志々雄真実

逆刃刀を腰に下げ、不殺を誓う流浪人・緋村剣心、彼こそは新時代・明治を切り拓いた維新志士の中で最強無比の伝説を持つ「人斬り抜刀斎」であった。天下の覇権を狙う、「人斬り抜刀斎」の後継者・志々雄真実の野望を阻止するため、京都に旅立つ剣心。道中、志々雄の配下で十本刀の一人、〝天剣〟の宗次郎に、逆刃刀を折られてしまう。京都で逆刃刀・真打を譲り受けた剣心は、かつての師、現・飛天御剣流継承者「比古清十郎」を訪ねた。生と死の間の修行で奥義「天翔龍閃」を会得、左之助、斎藤と合流する。志々雄一派による京都大火、東京砲撃計画を阻止した剣心達は、決戦の場・志々雄のアジトへと向かった。アジトでは十本刀の三強、〝明王〟の安慈、〝盲剣〟の宇水、そして宗次郎が待ちうけていた。激闘の末、安慈は左之介に敗れ、斎藤と闘った宇水は死んだ。最後まで不殺を貫いた剣心に敗北した宗次郎は、何が正しいのかを見極めるため、志々雄の元を離れる決心をするのだった。蒼紫との再戦、宗次郎との激闘で、満身創痍の剣心だったが、ついに志々雄のいる「大灼熱の間」にたどり着く。弱肉強食の世の中、弱者は強者である自分の糧となるのが摂理だと言い放つ志々雄に剣心は挑んでいく。だが、志々雄の弐の秘剣・紅蓮腕によって吹き飛ばされ、意識を失ってしまった。そこへ別行動だった斎藤が飛び込んで来た…!!

16巻までのあらすじ

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第百四十一幕「両刃の炎」　四十七
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Act 139
Howling Laugh

!!!!!!!
SAITŌ!!

ガッ
牙突!!
GATOTSU!!

SHISHIO-
SAMA!!
NO-O-O-O!!

HYOHH !!!
HA, HA!

...DAMN.
I SAID IT BEFORE.
YOU ARE TOO MUCH LIKE ME...
I KNEW YOU WOULD MEET ME WITH AN AMBUSH.
A METAL BAND?!!
TEN YEARS AGO, I WAS SET ON FIRE AS I LAY UNCONSCIOUS FROM A BLOW TO THE HEAD.
I PROMISED MYSELF I WOULD *NEVER AGAIN* FALL THE SAME WAY.
YOU OUGHT TO HAVE DONE MORE RESEARCH, SAITŌ HAJIME.
YOUR *ONE SLIM CHANCE* OF VICTORY IS NOW LOST.

THOSE WOUNDS ON YOUR LEGS MUST BE FROM USUI...
THAT YOU MANAGED THE GATOTSU DESPITE THEM IS IMPRESSIVE.
HOWEVER, YOU ARE DONE NOW.
!
LETTING DOWN YOUR GUARD AGAIN?
FOOL!! THE ONE WHO OUGHT TO HAVE DONE RESEARCH IS YOU!

GATOTSU...
牙突
...ZERO-SHIKI!!!
零式!!!
!!

LET DOWN MY GUARD..?
I'M JUST TAKING MY TIME.
HUK...
A POINT-BLANK GATOTSU, HELD IN RESERVE.
NOT BAD... FOR A GOVERNMENT DOG.

I'D SAY YOU'VE EARNED YOURSELF AN HONORED PLACE...
...IN THE HISTORY OF SHISHIO'S KILLS!!
NO!!

TRY THIS...

二重の極み!!
FUTAE NO KIWAMI "MASTERY OF TWO LAYERS"!!
IF YOU COME AT ME...

...YOU SHOULD BE SURE, FIRST...
...TO FILL SOME OF THIS ENDLESS GAP!!

YOU...
...SCUM...
NO. YOU'RE THE SCUM.

FWAH, HA, HAH...
WAH, HA, HAH...
HAH, HA, HAH...
HA-A-A-AH, HA-HA-HA HA-HA-HA!!!

POWER!!
POWER! POWER! POWER! POWER! POWER! POWER!
I DID MISCALCULATE ONE THING—WITH LORD SHISHIO, WE WON'T HAVE TO WAIT TEN YEARS TO TAKE THE COUNTRY!!
FINISH THEM, SHISHIO-SAMA!
THEY'RE ONLY COCKROACHES!
FINISH THEM!
DON'T RUSH ME. I HAVEN'T FOUGHT IN SO LONG. LET ME SOAK IN THE AFTERTASTE OF VICTORY.
SORRY...
...BUT THERE IS NO VICTORY HERE FOR YOU YET.

AH, YES. I FORGOT THAT THERE'S YET...
...ONE MORE DOG TO BRING TO HEEL.

THIS WAS DONE BY
KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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るろうに剣心
明治剣客浪漫譚

Act 140—Thread of Life

SO, THEN. DOES THIS LAST DOG...
...WISH TO DIE WITH THE OTHERS?

...DOG.
THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE, AOSHI!
HAVEN'T YOU ALREADY BEEN DEFEATED BY HIMURA?!
WHAT PLACE DO YOU HAVE IN THIS BATTLE?!
YOU SHAME THIS PLACE BY EVEN ENTERING! GET OUT!!

OUT. I SAID!
!
AND YET...
AND YOU ARE... HŌJI, IS IT?
A FACT IS A FACT. I DID LOSE.

IN HIS DUEL WITH THIS LOSER, BATTŌSAI TOOK INJURIES...
...AND SPENT ENERGY THAT HE OTHERWISE WOULD NOT HAVE.
AND SO, IF WE'RE TO DETERMINE A TRUE WINNER...
HMPH!
NONSENSE! EVEN AT HIS BEST, BATTŌSAI IS NO MATCH FOR SHISHIO-SAMA!!
THERE WOULD BE NO DIFFERENCE IN THE OUTCOME!!
YOU'LL BALANCE THE SCALES...
...BY TAKING HIS PLACE.
HŌJI, LET IT BE.
SHISHIO-SAMA!

I DON'T CARE TO LEAVE ANY DOUBT...
...AS TO THE *TRUE* VICTOR OF THIS MATCH.
スッ
AS THINGS STAND, IT IS I WHO HAS DEFEATED HIMURA.
WILL YOU MAKE *ME*, TOO, A BOUQUET ON YOUR ONIWABANSHŪ HEADSTONE?
......
OUR ALLIANCE...
...IS NOW BROKEN.

STRIKE ME!!
FEH.
YOU'RE SO SLOW, I CAN SEE ALL YOUR—

HA! AGAINST THE ATTACKS OF SHISHIO-SAMA...
...EVEN WITH HIS KODACHI, AOSHI CANNOT STRIKE!!
AOSHI IS ON THE DEFENSIVE!!

SHISHIO-SAMA... BEHIND YOU!!

WHAT'S WRONG?
!
YOU'VE CORNERED YOUR OPPONENT. YOU HAVE HIS BACK.
THE PERFECT TIME TO STRIKE... AND YET YOU HESITATE!

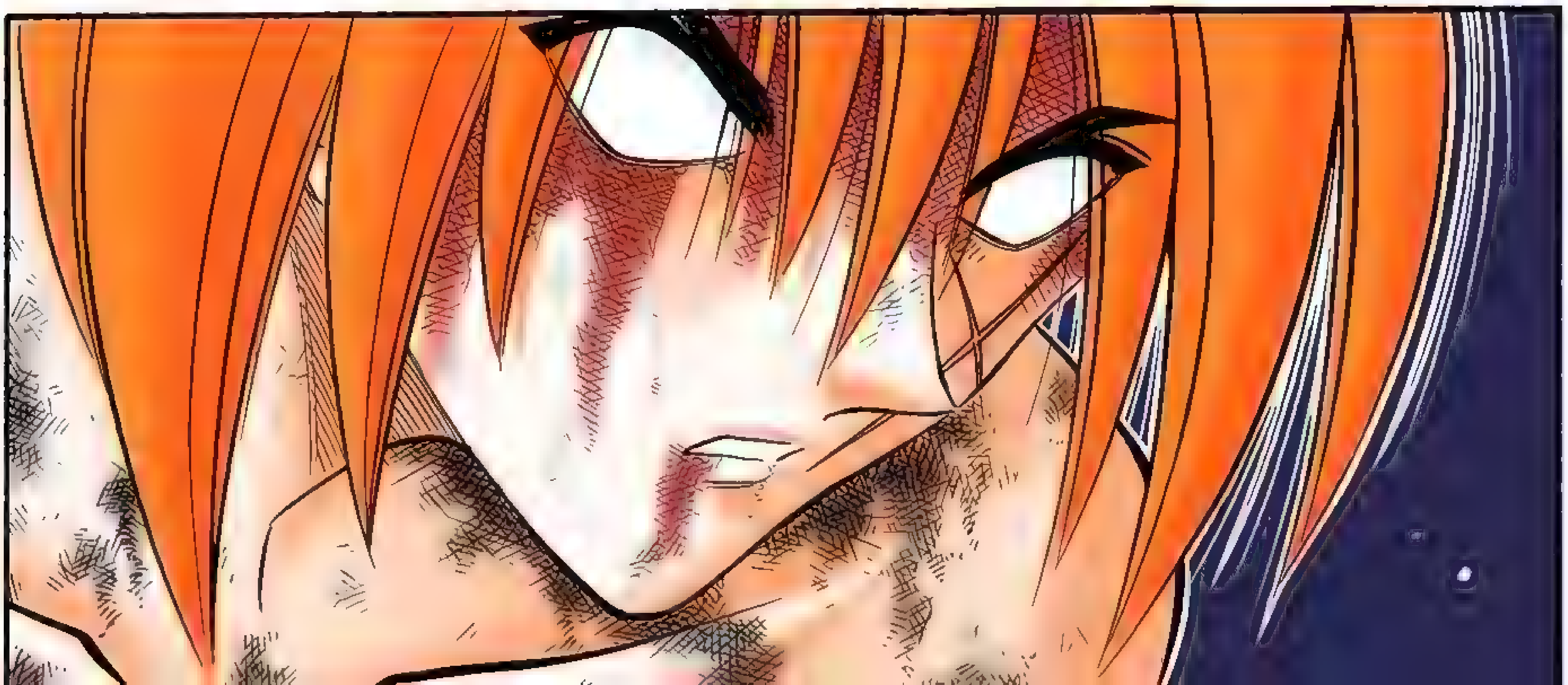
IS IT YOU CAN'T ATTACK?
OR IS IT...
YOU CHOOSE NOT TO?!
......
!!
THAT MOVE—

御庭番衆式小太刀二刀流
ONIWABANSHŪ-STYLE DUAL KODACHI...
回天剣舞・六連!!
KAITEN-KENBU ROKUREN!!!
TOO SLOW!!

YOUR "ROKUREN" SWORD-DANCE REQUIRES SIX SIMULTANEOUS SLASHES...
KNH ...!
YOU WEREN'T EVEN CLOSE.
AS I THOUGHT, THE *AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI* HAS TAKEN YOUR STRENGTH.
AFTER THAT, ALL YOU CAN KILL NOW...
...IS TIME!

GNH !!
HOW PITIFUL.
ONCE YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN A WARLORD. NOW YOU'RE ONLY STALLING.
BUT STILL, NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME YOU WASTE...
...IT'S USELESS IF BATTŌSAI CANNOT GET TO HIS FEET.

YOU MAY RUN WITH A DIFFERENT *PACK*, SHINOMORI AOSHI, BUT IN THE END, YOU AND HIMURA ARE THE *SAME*.
ASKED "WHITE," OR "BLACK," ULTIMATELY, YOU WILL ALWAYS CHOOSE WHITE.
AS SOMEONE WHO CHOOSES *BLACK*, WITHOUT FEAR, THE MOMENT YOU MET *ME*...
...YOUR *FATE* WAS ALREADY *SEALED*.
ARE BATTŌSAI AND I ALIKE? I DON'T KNOW. BUT ONE THING...
...THAT I *CANNOT* BELIEVE...
...IS THAT *HE* IS WEAKER THAN *YOU*!!



!!!!
WORRY NOT, SHISHIO-SAMA! HIMURA IS BARELY CONSCIOUS!!
HURRY! THE KILLING BLOW!!
AND THEN THIS NATION WILL BE IN OUR HANDS!!
くあっ!!

ビクッ
ドシャッ!!
UH... UH...

NOT A ONE OF US HAS HIS FATE SEALED, NOT WHEN...
...THERE STILL IS TIME FOR HIM TO FIGHT!!
FINAL BATTLE... ROUND TWO...
BEGIN!

THIS WAS DONE BY KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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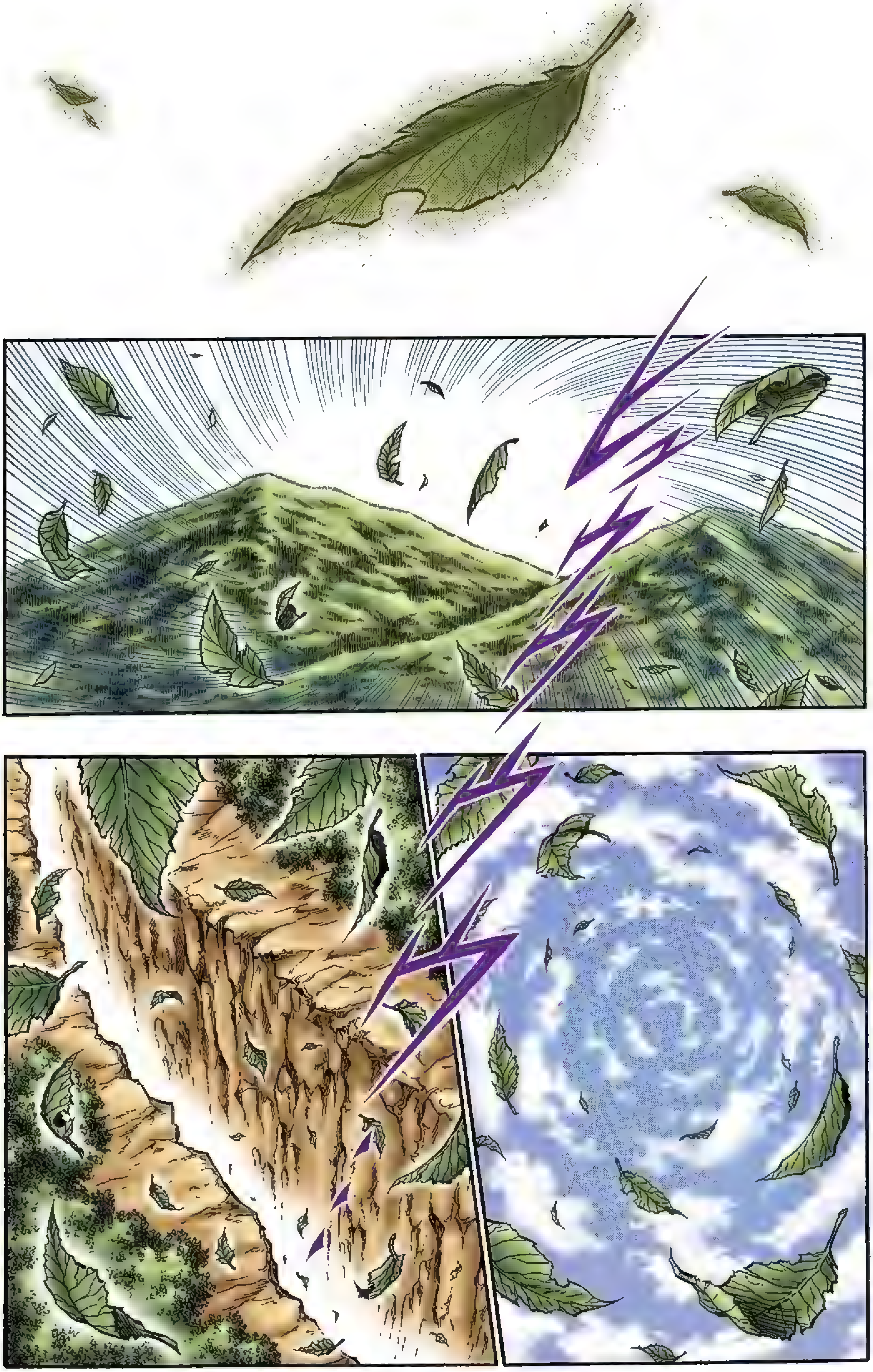
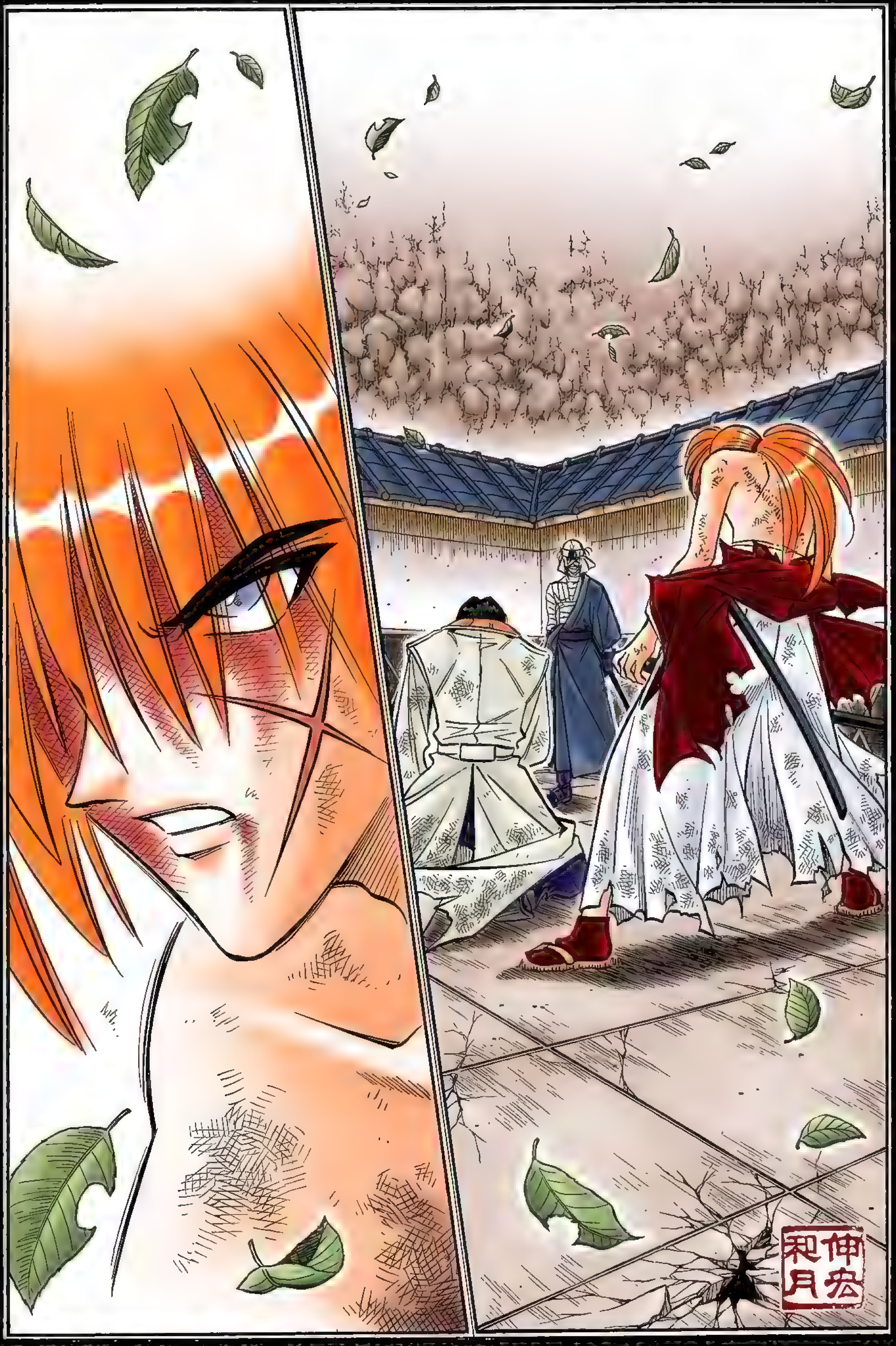
るろうに剣心
明治剣客浪漫譚



Act 141—Double-Edged Flame

第百四十一幕「両刃の炎」



HE'S... STANDING.
NO. CALM DOWN. THAT'S ALL IT IS— STANDING.
BURNED BY THE HOMURA DAMA AND BLASTED BY THE GUREN KAINA...
...HIS BODY CLEARLY NEAR DEATH...
...HE MAY STILL HAVE HIS AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI, BUT SURELY NO STRENGTH TO USE IT!
AND YET...
THIS CHILL! THIS UNEASE! THIS DREAD!!
H...

HYOHH!!
ビシィッ
パシィッ
HEEE!!
KYAH!!

WE MUSTN'T UNDER-ESTIMATE HIM!!
HIMURA BATTŌSAI IS BEYOND MY UNDER-STANDING!!
I CANNOT IMAGINE SHISHIO-SAMA LOSING...
AND YET... AND YET, THIS MAN!!

SO... FINALLY ON YOUR FEET, HUH?
YOU HAD ME WORRIED.
EITHER WAY, I'M...
...NO USE TO YOU NOW.

YOU DID SAY I WASN'T TO INTERFERE...
GUESS I'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO DO WHAT YOU SAID.
NOW!!

AH, HOW THIS BRINGS ME BACK...
YEARS AGO, MY FLESH AND BLOOD...
...WERE TRANSFORMED INTO AN INFERNO. NOW, *YOU* RISE...
TO MAKE ME BURN YET AGAIN!!
!

OH...
...NO...
?
WHAT IS IT?
ばっ
コチ…コチ…

THIS ISN'T GOOD!!
YOU HAVE TO STOP IT!!
!
IT'S BEEN 15 MINUTES!
IF HE GOES MUCH FURTHER, HE—!!
'SCUSE ...
...ME?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER?! SHISHIO-SAMA HAS BURNS ALL OVER...
...HE CAN'T REGULATE HIS TEMPERATURE... HIS BODY WILL HEAT UP UNTIL...!!

THE DOCTOR SAYS HE CAN ONLY MOVE AT FULL-STRENGTH FOR 15 MINUTES!
HIS TEMPERATURE WILL ONLY KEEP CLIMBING, AND...
...AFTER THAT, NO ONE KNOWS WHAT WILL HAPPEN!!
HYAAH!

STOP HIM!
AND THAT IS WHY... FOR ALL HIS POWERS...
...HE CREATED THE JUPPONGATANA TO ACT AS HIS ARMS AND LEGS!
HURRY!
SHISHIO-SAMA...
!

WHAT?!
BELIEVE, YUMI!
LORD SHISHIO CHOSE US...
IT IS OUR DUTY TO TRUST THE MASTER.

THE LOCOMOTIVE HAS SHOWN THIS NEW AGE...
...THAT *HEAT* BRINGS *POWER!*
IF IT'S HIS *INHUMAN HEAT* THAT GIVES SHISHIO-SAMA HIS POWER...
...THEN, THE *MORE* HE BURNS, THE *STRONGER* HE WILL GROW!!
BUT...HIS BODY WILL REACH A LIMIT...
WHAT LIMIT?!
WHAT LIMIT CAN POSSIBLY *FAVOR* HIMURA AND *DOOM* SHISHIO-SAMA?!

IT'S OVER !!!

NOT YET...
IT'S NOT ENOUGH.
IF IT'S PAIN YOU NEED TO BRING YOUR STRENGTH... SHALL I HELP?
OR HOW ABOUT ANOTHER GLIMPSE OF DEATH...
...WITH MY GUREN KAINA?!

FIFTEEN MINUTES SINCE THEIR BATTLE BEGAN.
TO THEM, "MEIJI" COULD NOT BE MORE DIFFERENT, THOUGH THEY LIVED THE SAME "BAKUMATSU."

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, IT'S ABOUT TO END.
!!!

THIS WAS DONE BY
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るろうに剣心
明治剣客浪漫譚

SHISHIO-SAMA!!
第百四十二幕
「最終局面」

Act 142—Final Encounter
伸宏
和月

BELIEVE!! NO MATTER WHAT BATTŌSAI MAY BRING FORTH, MY LORD WILL NOT FALL!
HE WILL NOT— CANNOT!!
SHISHIO-SAMA!
HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ—

龍槌！
RYŪTSUI "DRAGON HAMMER"!
翔閃!!
SHŌSEN "FLIGHT STRIKE"!!
ONE-TWO HIT!
HE WON'T LET THIS CHANCE GO...
HE'LL KEEP COMING...
HYOHHH!!

龍巻閃・「凩」!!!
RYŪKANSEN "DRAGON SPIRAL" • "WINTRY WIND"!!
「旋」!!!!
WHORL!!

嵐!!!!!
あらし
STORM!!
FIVE HITS!!

IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE?!
SHAAAH!!
YES-S-S!!

IT HIT!!
THE HOMURA DAMA!!

IT DIDN'T TAKE!!
BUT...THE HOMURA DAMA BURNS THE WOUND...!
THE MIND CAN OVERCOME SUCH PAIN...
ALL WHO CHOOSE THE LIFE OF BATTLE KNOW THIS.
BUT A WORLD THAT WOULD FORCE SUCH PAIN UPON THE WEAK, WHO HAVE NOT CHOSEN BLOODSHED...
...THAT, I WILL NOT ALLOW!!

飛天御剣流
HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ...
九頭龍閃!!!!!!
KUZU-RYŪSEN "NINE-HEADED DRAGON"!!
玖
...9.

OHH
!!

...SO HE IS AFFECTED! EACH STRIKE OF SHISHIO-SAMA LEADS HIM CLOSER TO DEATH.
AND YET, THIS MAN, WITH HIS DESIRE ONLY TO PROTECT THOSE WITHOUT POWER, BORE THE HOMURA DAMA, COUNTERED THE GUREN KAINA...
...AND MADE SHISHIO-SAMA FALL.
MY LORD PUT DEFEATING THIS MAN ON PAR WITH CONQUERING JAPAN...
HE WAS NOT WRONG.
IT IS NOT THAT THE COUNTRY MUST FALL IF WE DEFEAT HIM. IT'S THAT DEFEATING HIMURA KENSHIN...
...IS A TASK AS GREAT AS TAKING THE NATION!!

WHAT IS THIS?!
THE FLAMES...!
SEE THEM LEAP AND DANCE!!
THEY RESPOND TO SHISHIO'S ENERGY, JUST AS THE LEAVES SHATTERED FOR KENSHIN...
"JUST AS"? LEAVES AND FLAMES AREN'T *QUITE* THE SAME THING.
FINAL ROUND.
HERE COMES.
SHI—

THE FINAL SECRET MOVE.
KAGUZUCHI.
ハァ
ハァ

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るろうに剣心
明治剣客浪漫譚

第百四十三幕「天翔龍閃其之参」

HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ END MOVE...
AMA-KAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI!!
ハァ
BUT CAN HE PULL IT OFF IN HIS CURRENT STATE?
EITHER WAY... THIS WILL BE THE LAST STRIKE!
ハァ... ハァ...

第百四十三幕「天翔龍閃其之参」

ハァ…
ハァ…
すっ…
BATTŌJUTSU FORM!!
THE AMAKAKERU—
DON'T PANIC!!
HE'S WOUNDED! JUST BECAUSE HE TAKES THE FORM DOESN'T MEAN HE CAN DO IT!!
AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI...
...IS A FORM BASED ON THE LEFT FOOT!
AND, EVEN IF HE DOES, THE SECRET OF THE MOVE...
...HAS ALREADY BEEN REVEALED BY SŌJIRŌ!
ハッ!

RIGHT OR LEFT, IT'S JUST ONE INSTANT...
...AN INSTANT THAT SHISHIO-SAMA IS CERTAIN NOT TO MISS!!
ハァ
ハァ

I DON'T KNOW *WHEN* I'VE HAD SO MUCH FUN.
NOT SINCE THE *BAKUMATSU*, SURELY. AND YET, I *DO* STILL HAVE A COUNTRY TO CONQUER, SO, I'M OUT OF TIME TO PLAY WITH YOU.
FOR THIS ONE, THERE IS LITTLE "FUN"... ACCOMPLISHED AS YOU MAY BE.
AND YET, IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK OF *TIME*, SHISHIO, YOU MUST *KNOW* THE AGE OF THE HITOKIRI IS LONG SINCE PAST.

SO LONG AS I BEAR THIS "MUGENJIN," IT SHALL *NEVER* END!
IT ENDED WHEN THIS ONE TOOK THIS SAKABATŌ.
...NOW.

THE RIGHT?
...OR THE LEFT?
THE LEFT!!
天翔龍閃!!
AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI!!

BLOCK!!

NNRGH !!
NCH!

DEFLECTED!!
HYAAAAH!!
FROM THE BASE...
...TO THE TIP OF THE BLADE..
...THE FULL FIRE OF "MUGENJIN"...
...RELEASED!!
THE AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI IS DEFEATED!!

終の秘剣
FINAL SECRET SWORD...
火産霊神!!!
KAGUZUCHI!!

WHAT...
WHAT IS—?!
...IN HELL ?!

AM I BEING PULLED IN?
...BY BATTŌSAI?!
NO! IT'S...
I'M BEING SUCKED INTO...
...THE SPACE IN FRONT OF US!!
THE AIR PUSHED OUT BY THE DEFLECTION OF THE FIRST STRIKE...
...HAS CREATED A VACUUM, SUCKING OBJECTS INTO IT!!

THE AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI IS "SHINSOKU" GOD-SPEED BATTŌJUTSU...
OH-H-H—
ALSO!
THE BATTŌJUTSU OF HITEN MITSURUGI-RYŪ.....
...ARE ALL BASED ON TWO-STEP ATTACKS!!

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るろうに剣心
明治剣客浪漫譚

Act 144—Shape of Love

YOU WORRIED ABOUT HIM?
DON'T BE.
THE SECRET MOVE I GRANTED HIM IS UNBEATABLE.
EVEN IF ONE'S OPPONENT DODGES THE FANGS OF THE DRAGON IN FLIGHT, STILL THEY SHALL BE CAUGHT BY THE WIND OF ITS WINGS...
...AND BE SHREDDED BY ITS CLAWS.
UNLESS, OF COURSE, KENSHIN'S TOO WOUNDED TO USE IT.
THERE'S ALWAYS THAT.
....
...OF COURSE.
STILL, I...BELIEVE IN HIM.

AS FOR ME, I CAN'T STOP WORRYING...
ヒョコッ
IT'S THE SAME AS WHEN I THINK ABOUT AOSHI-SAMA...
ポッ
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU SEE IN HIM.
へっ
LOVE IS DIFFERENT FOR EACH OF US, YAHIKO-KUN.
うんうん
FIND 100 PEOPLE, AND YOU'LL FIND 100 FORMS OF LOVE.
THERE'S NOTHING T' CRY ABO—
THE SHAPE OF LOVE...IS EVER CHANGING.
I MEAN, AREN'T YOU THE LEAST BIT EMBARR—

第百四十四幕「由美・愛の形」

天翔龍閃！
あまかけるりゅうのひらめき
GYAHH!
AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI!

ガキン

LOOKS LIKE IT... LANDED...
NGAH...
NGAH...
NGUH..

FIRST, THE STEPPING IN— THE DRAWING OF THE BLADE—THE CENTRIFUGAL FORCE OF THE SPIN— AND FINALLY, THE VACUUM AND THE SECOND STEP.
THE BLOW'S SECOND STRIKE CONCENTRATES ITS POWER FAR *BEYOND* THAT FIRST STRIKE WHICH *I* EXPERIENCED.
IT HIT HIM HARD?
IF HE STILL STANDS...
...HE IS TRULY INVINCIBLE.
SHISHIO-SAMA...?

NGUH...
...GAH...
NGH NGH...
!
NGYAHH-H!!
YA-A-A-A-AUGH!!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM...?!

THE LIMIT...!!
YUMI, NO!!
STOP!
HE MUSTN'T GO ANY FURTHER!!
BECAUSE OF THE TERRIBLE BURNS THAT COVER HIS ENTIRE BODY, SHISHIO-SAMA MUST FIGHT NO MORE THAN 15 MINUTES!

PLEASE!!
HE'S IN PAIN!!
ハァ
ハァ
PLEASE...
スッ…

TOO EASY, BATTOSAI.
THIS BATTLE IS NOT YET OVER.
AH...

SHISHIO, YOU...
...FOR VICTORY, WOULD...
...YOU BETRAY THE ONE...
...WHO LOVES YOU?!
..."BETRAY," IS IT?
YOU'VE NO RIGHT TO SPEAK OF IT.
SHE KNOWS ME LIKE NO ONE ELSE...
AS I UNDERSTAND HER.

I WAS ALWAYS JEALOUS OF...THE BOY AND... KAMATARI.
TO MY LORD, COMBAT IS ALL, AND YET...
...ALL *I* COULD DO... WAS TEND TO HIS PLEASURE.
I WAS...SO ASHAMED... FRUSTRATED.
BUT NOW... NO.
FOR THE FIRST TIME, I...WAS USEFUL, IN BATTLE...
IN... THE MOST *IMPORTANT* BATTLE... OF MY LORD'S LIFE.
I'M... HAPPY...

YOU MUST WIN...
...SHISHIO-SAMA.
I GO AHEAD...TO AWAIT YOU... IN HELL.
コト

KOMAGATA YUMI, THE MOST UNFORTUNATE OF WOMEN...
YET SHE FOUND JOY AT THE END.
IT IS NOT OUR ROLE TO DEBATE LIFE AND DEATH.
OURS IS BUT TO FIGHT.
GUH...
!!
THIS IS MADNESS !!
WHAT JOY CAN THERE BE IN DEATH?!
SO LONG AS ONE IS ALIVE, OTHER WAYS CAN BE—

HE WHO STANDS FIRST AND DELIVERS THE NEXT BLOW...
...HE WHO SURVIVES...WILL CLAIM VICTORY!!
ドク…
ドク…
...KENSHIN...!

THIS WAS DONE BY KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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THE BATTLE TO END ALL THEIR BATTLES—THE ONE TO DECIDE THE FATE OF THE AGE—IS AT LAST COMING TO A CLOSE.
Act 145
Duel of an Era
IN THE END, IT COMES DOWN NOT TO A CLASH OF FORCE OR A CONTEST OF SKILL, BUT A RACE AGAINST THE RAPID EBBING OF LIFE.

THE AGE WILL DECIDE THE MAN— WHOM WILL IT BE?
HH
HH
HH
HH
HH
HH
HH
HH
HH
HH
HH
HH

HH
HH
HH
HH
THAT RED STEAM...
HIS.. BLOOD, EVAPORATING !!
NO...
NO-O-O !!
HIS BODY-TEMPERATURE IS GOING HIGHER AND HIGHER... BEYOND THE BOILING POINT OF BLOOD!!
SHISHIO-SAMA IS PASSING HIS LIMIT!!!

THE MATCH MUST GO TO SHISHIO!!
AFTER ALL THAT, TO STILL HAVE SO MUCH POWER...

KENSHIN !!
HH
HH
HH
NO... STRENGTH LEFT TO...
AS THOUGH DRAINING...OUT, ALONG WITH THE BLOOD...
DEATH HAS NEVER... BEEN FAR AWAY, AND YET...
...NEVER... SO CLOSE AS NOW.

THIS...
...MUST BE DEATH, TRULY.
ハァ
ハァ
ハァ…
AND YET, THIS BATTLE... HAS COST SHISHIO MOST OF HIS POWER, AS WELL.
EVEN IF HE RECOVERS AND RISES AGAIN IN A FEW YEARS...THOSE WHO CARRY THE NEW ERA ON THEIR SHOULDERS WILL HAVE GROWN STRONGER, TOO... AND WILL STOP HIM.
SURELY THE MISSION...
...HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.

TO PROTECT JAPAN...
TO PROTECT KYOTO...
...AND ...

KENSHIN...
IF YOU DIE HERE, YOU WILL MAKE A GIRL WHO CAME TO KYOTO WITH THE HOPE ONLY OF SEEING YOU VERY UNHAPPY.

LET'S GO HOME...
...TO TOKYO, ALL OF US...
...TOGETHER...

NO DEATH! NOT NOW, NOT YET!!
ハァ
ハァ
ハァ
OTHER LIVES DEPEND ON ME— MY LIFE IS NOT JUST MINE!
AND NOTHING IS STRONGER...
...THAN A WILL TO LIVE!!
....
NO.
SHISHIO MAKOTO IS STRONGER STILL!!

THE STRONG LIVE! THE WEAK DIE! IT'S THE ONLY LAW THERE IS!!
IT'S WHY I SHALL YET LIVE!!
YES, SHISHIO-SAMA, YES!!
THE LIMIT!
YOU HAVE BEATEN IT!!

ゴオオオオオオオ

SHI... SHIO... SAMA?!
SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION.
HIS TEMPERATURE ROSE UNTIL IT IGNITED HIS OWN FAT AND OILS.
THE DEVIL WHO EMERGED FROM THE FLAMES OF THE BAKUMATSU...
...RETURNS NOW TO THOSE FLAMES ONCE MORE.

NYAH...
NYAH, HA, HAH...
NYAHH, HAH, HAH, HAH!!

キ
コッ…
!
ハァ
ハァ
NO! I WON'T HAVE IT!!
IT WAS SHISHIO-SAMA WHO WON THIS DUEL!!
WRONG. THE WINNER IS THE SURVIVOR.

THE STRONG LIVE AND THE WEAK DIE...
IT'S WHAT HE HIMSELF SAID.
THE FLOW OF TIME CONNECTING THE PAST AND PRESENT...
...HAS NOT ALLOWED SHISHIO TO CONTINUE.
THE AGE...
...HAS DECIDED WHICH MAN WILL SURVIVE.

THIS WAS DONE BY
KOJOZERO SCANS

EDITED BY: KOJOZERO

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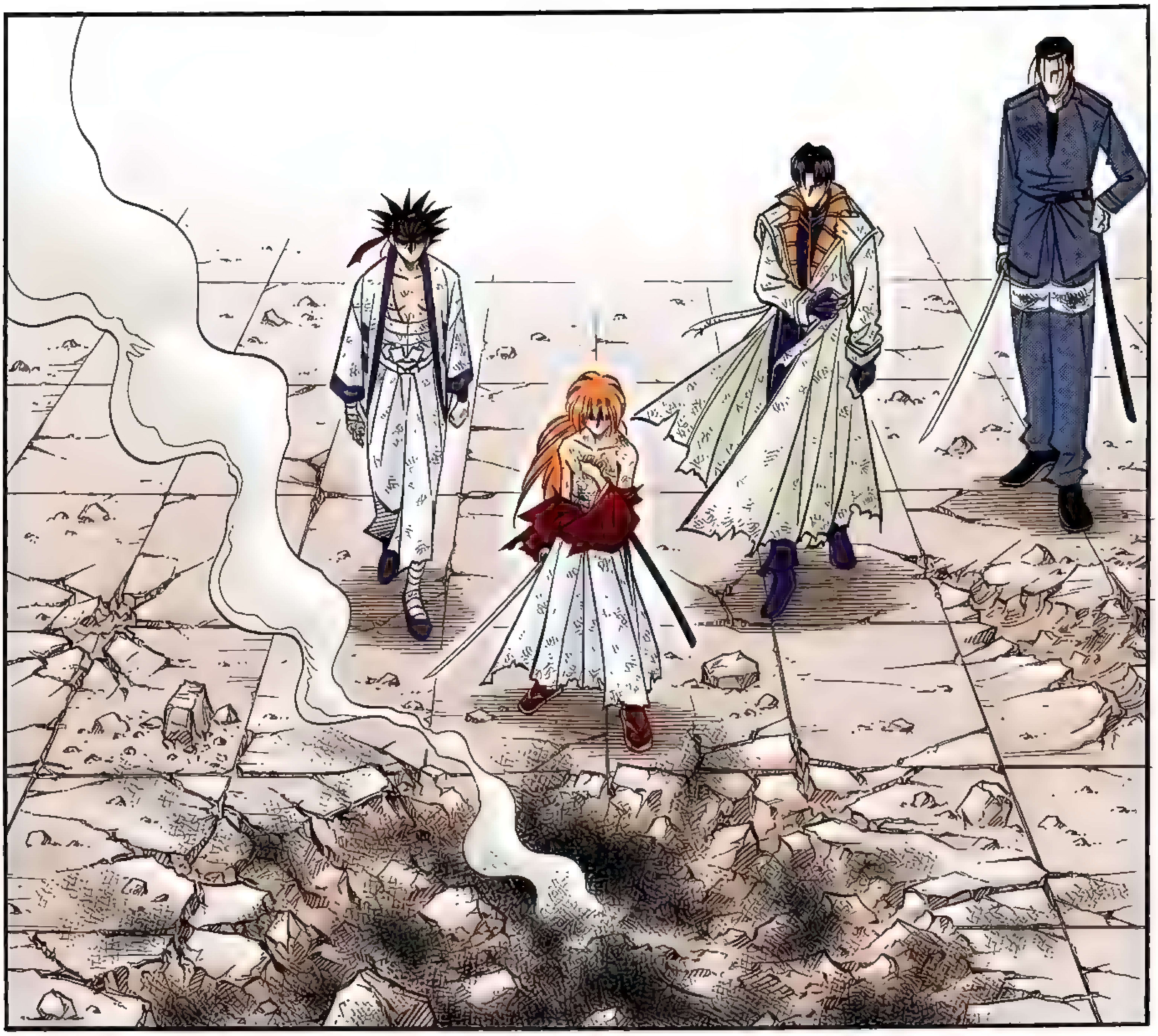
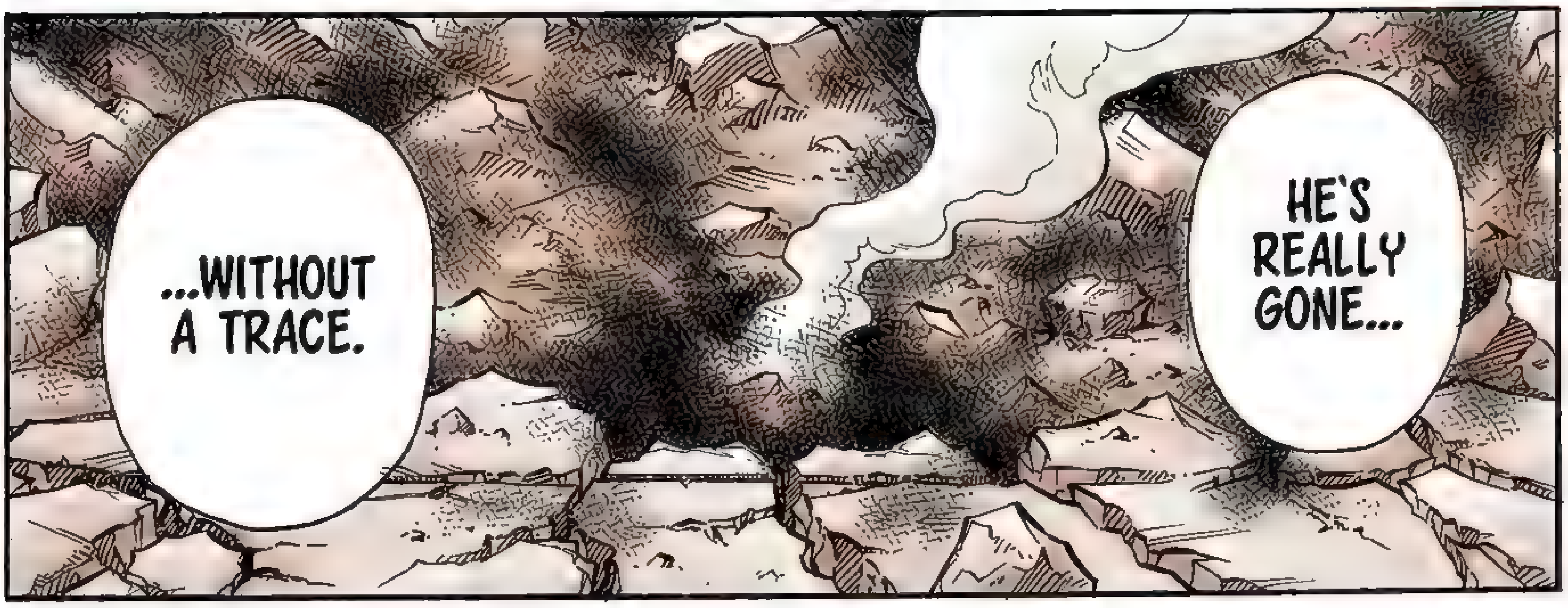
AND SO SHISHIO MAKOTO, THE DEMON WHO COMMANDED THE FLAMES, DISAPPEARED INTO THEM WITH HOWLS OF LAUGHTER.
THE MEANING OF THAT LAUGHTER...
...LOST TO ALL.
第百四十六幕「方治の執念」



Act 146

The Passion of Hōji



...YOU WON.
!......
NO...
!
HE DIDN'T LOSE! HE CAN'T LOSE!!
SHISHIO-SAMA IS INCAPABLE OF LOSING!!

...HE'S GONE MAD...
UWAH-H-H-H-H!!
KENSHIN!!

!
RRRGH! THAT LUNATIC !!

IT WON'T OPEN!!
IF I COULD JUST USE THE FUTAE NO KIWAMI—
AS I THOUGHT, THE AMAKAKERU RYŪ NO HIRAMEKI HAS TAKEN YOUR STRENGTH.
TCH...
ARGH! IF WE DON'T HURRY, KENSHIN WILL—!
MOVE.
!

HMPH.
GATOTSU ?
HOLD ON, NOW...
...YOU'RE ALMOST AS BANGED-UP AS ME.

......!
FEH.
I'VE LIVED THROUGH MORE BLOODSHED THAT YOU TWO COMBINED.
R-RIGHT!
!?

THE ARENA!
IT'S EXPLODING!!
HA, HA, HA! DIE! DIE! DIE!!
IF YOU ALL DIE, THERE IS NO VICTOR! IF YOU ALL DIE, SHISHIO-SAMA REMAINS INVINCIBLE!!
I'LL KILL YOU ALL!!

!
SHISHIO-SAMA ALONE TAKES THE DAY!!
唯一無敵なのだァァ!!
S...
SAITŌ!!

WORRIED
?
!

I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO TAKE OFF, YOU—!!
WHAT ABOUT OUR DUEL, HUH?!
WELL, SAITŌ?!
DID YOU NOT HEAR WHAT I SAID?
I'VE LIVED THROUGH MORE BLOODSHED THAN YOU TWO COMBINED.
BYE.

SAITOOOOO!

....
...MM...
YOU'RE AWAKE.
ANJI, YOU... SAVED ME.
WHY DID YOU SAVE ME?!
WHY DIDN'T YOU LET ME DIE WITH SHISHIO-SAMA?!

AH, SO SHISHIO-SAMA *DID* DIE.
ALONG WITH YUMI-SAN...
I'LL BE TAKING MY LEAVE NOW.
WHERE WILL YOU GO?
NO IDEA.
BUT IF I'M TO DISCOVER THE TRUTH OF LIFE...
...I HAD BETTER GET GOING.

I'LL TURN MYSELF OVER TO THE POLICE IN PENANCE.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
IF YOU STILL WANT TO DIE, I WON'T STOP YOU.
I'LL TURN MYSELF IN, TOO...
ぎりっ
BUT NOT FOR ANY "PENANCE"!!
I SHALL USE THEIR COURTS TO RECOUNT THIS BATTLE!!
I'LL AWAKEN THOSE GRAZING *CATTLE* IN THE GOVERNMENT TO THE NEED FOR *STRENGTH*!!
FOR SHISHIO-SAMA...
...AND FOR THIS COUNTRY.

DAMN SAITŌ!
HE SHOULD'VE LET ME KILL HIM...
...NOT SOME STUPID BLAST!!
...DAMN HIM!

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Act 147

Kyoto Epilogue
Fate of the Juppongatana (Part I)

IT'S BEEN A MONTH SINCE THE BATTLE AGAINST SHISHIO...
THE RAIN HAS PASSED... SUMMER HAS COME...
ジィー
ジィー
AND...

トン トン トン
!
KENSHIN!
YOU SURE YOU SHOULD BE UP?!
...QUITE.
THE WOUNDS ARE ALMOST ALL GONE.

BESIDES, SLEEPING THROUGH THE VICTORY PARTY IS GETTING HARDER BY THE DAY...
祝
志々雄一派打破記念第三十一次会
京都死守
ARGH! I CAN'T USE CHOPSTICKS WITH MY LEFT HAND...
MAKE—ROOM—STOP—SPINNING—
DEFEAT OF SHISHIO AND PROTECTION OF KYOTO DAY 31 AND COUNTING
WELL DONE.
TRUE, THAT.
I'M SO SORRY...
AOSHI-SAMA!! WHERE ARE YOU?!
'SOKAY.
UNTIL AOI-YA IS FULLY RESTORED...
...WE'RE BOARDING AT SAE'S "SHIROBEKO."
"INFESTING," MORE LIKE. ♡
WUZ WITH THE "♡"?
MEGUMI-DONO.
THANK YOU FOR THE MEDICAL ATTENTION.

YOU'RE WELCOME. BUT DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN YET.
WHEN SHE HEARD THAT KENSHIN HAD BEEN HURT, MEGUMI-SAN CAME RIGHT AWAY.
THAT NIGHT, AS THE SUN SET AND THE MOON ROSE...
...THEY HAD COME BACK TO US.
KENSHIN WAS AT DEATH'S DOOR.
NOTHING I SAID SEEMED TO REACH HIM.

BUT NOW...
SAE-DONO, MAY THIS ONE ASK FOR A CUP OF...?
RIGHT AWAY!
HEY, YOU LOT! HIMURA-KUN'S AWAKE!!
THIS CALLS FOR A SONG!!
OKINA !!
I SAID, WHERE THE HECK IS—?!
WHERE ARE YOU, AOSHI-SAMA?!

AT HIS ZEN TEMPLE, AS ALWAYS.
AGAIN?! WHAT'S HE DO THERE?!
HE HAS MUCH TO SORT OUT, MISAO...
BEST LEAVE HIM TO IT.
WHY SHOULD I?!
BECAUSE IT'S FOR HIM.
白べこ
京風牛鍋
WELL, WELL...
SO THIS IS WHERE THEY'RE HUDDLING.

SANO!
ON IT!!
!
...WHAT.
I JUST WANTED TO MAKE AN ENTRANCE.
I MEAN, REALLY!
SWORD-HUNTER CHŌ!
FEH!
GEH!
I THOUGHT THE POLICE HAD YOU!

—AN OFFICER?!
OF THE LAW??
LIAR!!
MORE A SPY, THEN.
...
SO YOU CUT A DEAL.
A FULL PARDON IN EXCHANGE FOR INFORMATION.
WITH SHISHIO-SAMA GONE, WHY NOT?
OF COURSE, I'LL QUIT...
...SOON AS SOMETHING ELSE COMES ALONG.
I'M GONNA TELL ON YOU!!
SHUT IT, WEASEL-GIRL.
DAMN, YOU'RE LOUD.

SO, WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE, BROOM HEAD?
CHARMING AS EVER, BIRD HEAD.
I'VE COME TO TELL WHAT'S HAPPENED WITH THE CAPTURED JUPPON-GATANA.
WHO'S A WEASEL?!
I'M GONNA—!!
!
...WELL?
TELL US, THEN.
MOST ARE LIKE ME.
PARDONED, CONSCRIPTED INTO GOVERNMENT SERVICE FOR THEIR EXTRAORDINARY ABILITIES, AND ASSIGNED TO VARIOUS POSTS.

"FLIGHTED" HENYA IS NOW AN ARMY SCOUT, STUDYING EVENTS IN ASIA FROM THE SKIES.
"HAGUN" SAIZUCHI USES HIS GIFTS OF PERSUASION IN SECRET NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTRY...

...WHILE "HAGUN" FUJI HELPS DEVELOP THE LAND DURING TIMES OF PEACE, ALSO READY TO DEFEND HOKKAIDO IN TIMES OF WAR.
...EESH.
AND THAT WOMAN...
...THE ONE WE FOUGHT... KAMATARI?
"GIANT SCYTHE" KAMATARI WILL BE A FOREIGN SPY, MASQUERADING AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT...
...OR, SO THEY HOPE.
ずず…
ONLY HOPE?
MM. THE WOUND YOU GAVE HER ISN'T HEALING WELL.
BUT I THOUGHT THE KAMIYA SCHOOL DIDN'T...
IT SHOULDN'T BE THAT SERIOUS.

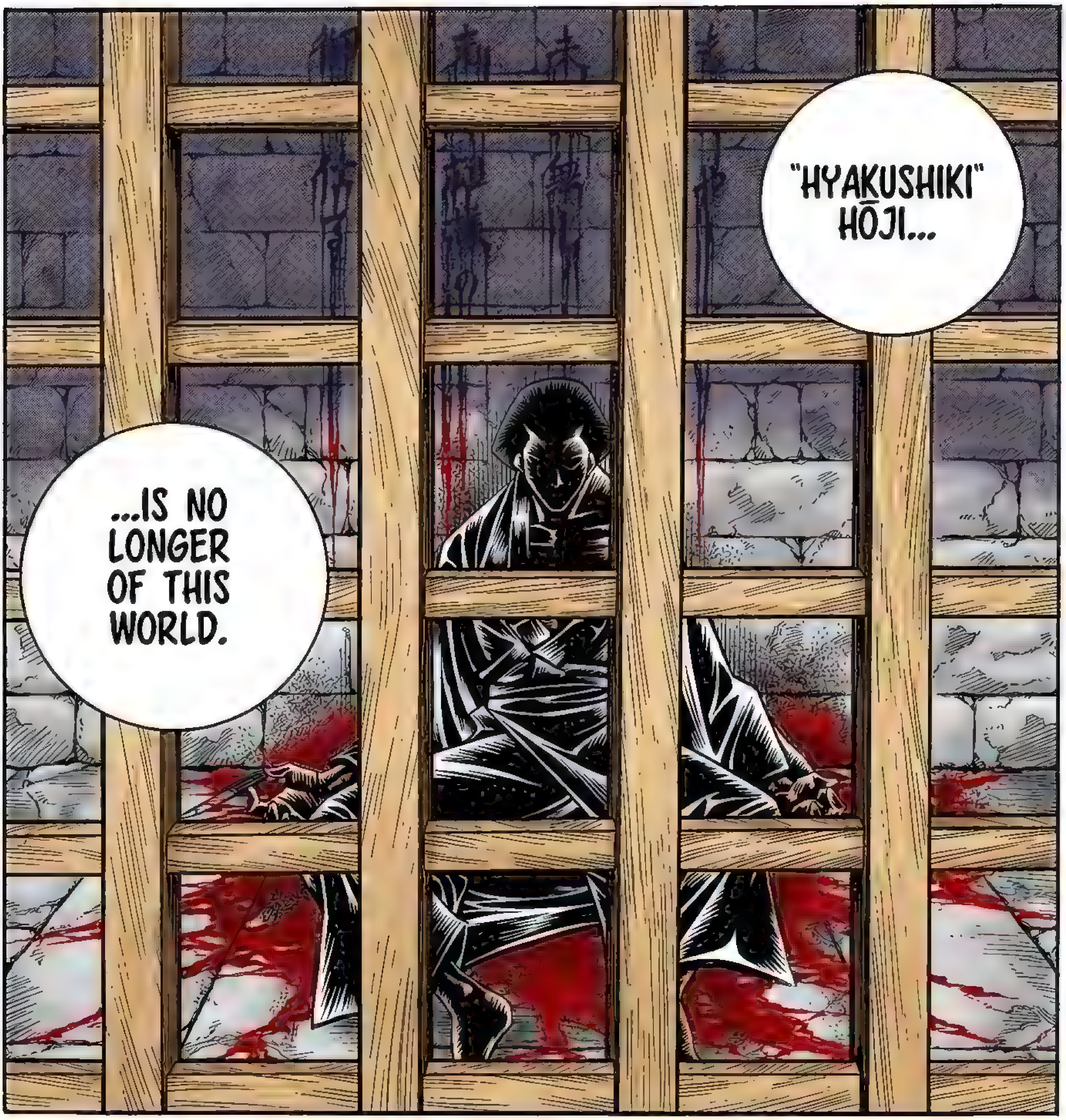
TRUE. THE WOUND ITSELF ISN'T BAD. IT'S HER *HEART* THAT SUFFERS.
SHE HASN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE HEARING OF SHISHIO-SAMA'S DEATH.
MY LORD IS GONE...?
THEN PERHAPS...
...I OUGHT TO DIE TOO.
WHAT'S THE POINT OF LIVING?!
DON'T BE STUPID.
LOOK, YOU WANNA DIE, YOU GO AHEAD.
BUT SHISHIO-SAMA WON'T LIKE IT.
WHAT?

YOU CAME TO KYOTO LATE, SO MAYBE YOU DIDN'T HEAR, BUT THE MISSION OF THE JUPPONGATANA DIDN'T END WITH SERVING SHISHIO-SAMA IN LIFE. WE HAVE A *SECOND* CALLING.
SHOULD WE LOSE IN COMBAT, HE SAID, WE WERE TO REMAIN ALIVE—TO TELL THE *TRUE* STORY OF OUR LORD, TO PREVENT THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT FROM REWRITING IT AS IT SEES FIT.
カチャッ...
...YOU LIE.
WE KANSAI PEOPLE TELL JOKES—BUT NOT LIES!
SHISHIO-SAMA KNEW YOU HAD FEELINGS FOR HIM.
"LET HER BE MY FINEST MINSTREL," HE SAID, AND LAUGHED.
YES...A MINSTREL...
IT'S WHAT *YUMI* WOULD HAVE DONE IF SHE'D LIVED... AND *THE BOY*, TOO, IF HE'D STAYED.

HE DIDN'T SAY A WORD OF IT.
TO THINK SHISHIO MAKOTO WOULD SAY SUCH A THING...
SHOULD I...BE RELIEVED?
DON'T BE STUPID.
LIFE'S FUNNY, HUH?
もぐもぐ
I FIGURE, HEY! SO LONG AS SHE'S ALIVE, AT LEAST SHE'S NOT DEAD.
...YOU'RE A WISE MAN.
KAMATARI CAN'T EVEN *IMAGINE* A LIFE WITHOUT SHISHIO-SAMA...
SHE CAN'T GO ON UNLESS SHE BELIEVES HE WANTS HER TO.
HE'D NEVER GO ALONG WITH ANY *GOVERNMENT* DEAL.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE REST OF THEM, BUT...WHAT HAPPENED TO ANJI?

"BRIGHT KING" ANJI AVOIDED EXECUTION, THANKS TO YOUR INTERVENTION... BUT, BY HIS OWN CHOICE, HE'LL PAY FOR HIS DEEDS.
HE'S IN A HOKKAIDO PRISON AS WE SPEAK, SERVING A 25-YEAR SENTENCE.
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IS...A LONG TIME.
AND WHAT OF THE OTHER?
THE ONE WHO WITNESSED THE DUEL AGAINST SHISHIO...
THE MOST LOYAL OF HIS FOLLOWERS.

DEAD.
!?


"HYAKUSHIKI" HŌJI...
...IS NO LONGER OF THIS WORLD.

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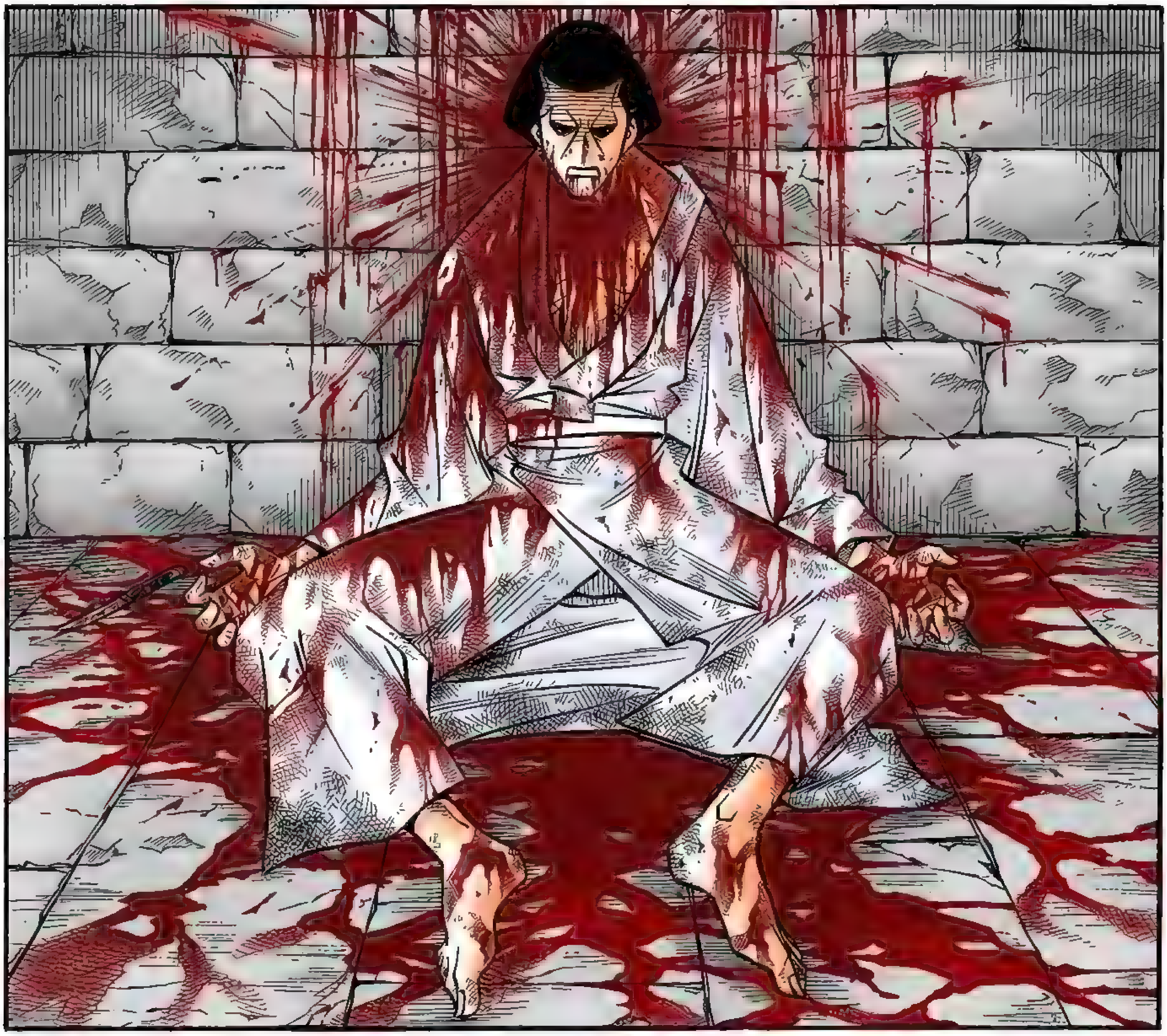
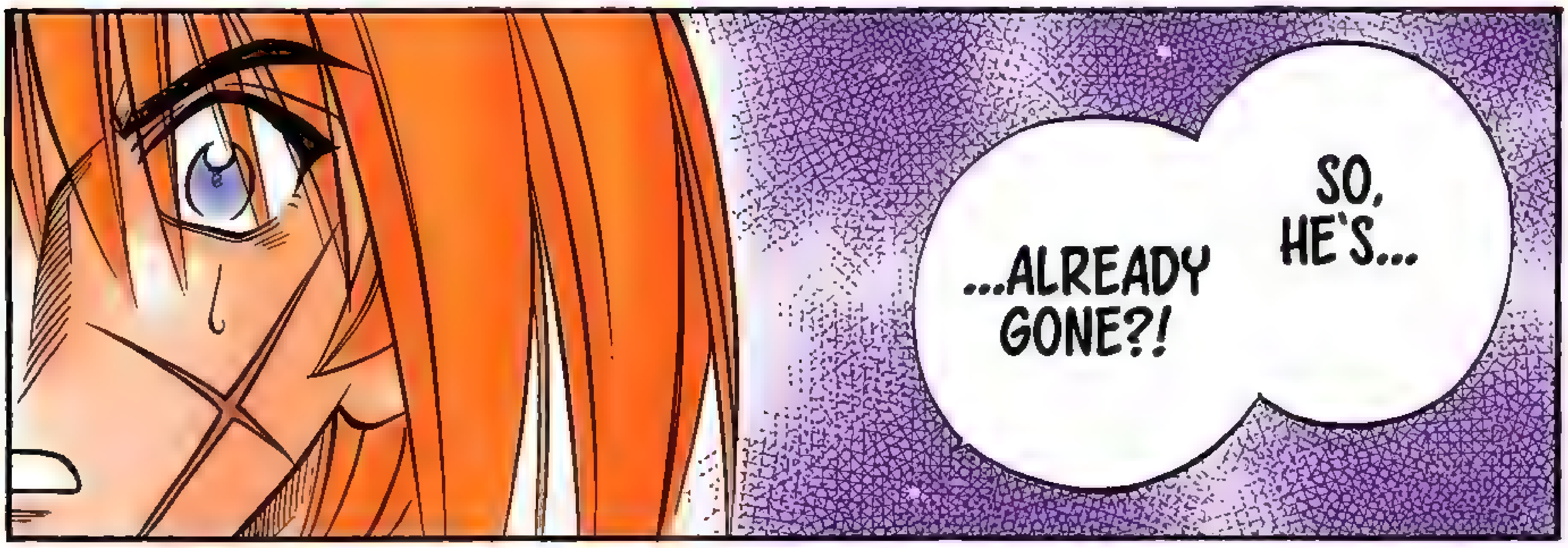


Act 148
Kyoto Epilogue Fate of the Juppongatana (Part II)



YEAH.
ANJI SAVED HIM AFTER THE BATTLE, AND HE TURNED HIMSELF OVER TO THE POLICE.
HE WAITED FOR HIS DAY IN COURT TO PRAISE TO THE WORLD SHISHIO-SAMA AND HIS CODE OF LIFE.
IN THE END, THOUGH, HE DIDN'T GET A TRIAL.
HE NEVER GOT THE CHANCE TO SPEAK PUBLICLY.

NO, OF COURSE NOT. THE MEIJI GOV'T WOULD FEAR SHISHIO IN DEATH AS WELL AS IN LIFE. THOSE IN POWER WOULD PREFER...
...THAT THIS PARTICULAR SHADOW OF THE BAKUMATSU STAY THERE, WITHOUT RESURFACING.
THE GOV'T OFFERED HŌJI A DEAL—HE'D BEEN CLEVER ENOUGH TO BUILD THIS HUGE ORGANIZATION AND EVEN PURCHASE A BATTLESHIP WITHOUT ANYONE KNOWING!
NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE GOV'T COULD USE A GUY LIKE THAT.
"FORGET ABOUT SHISHIO," THEY SAID, "AND SWEAR US YOUR LOYALTY. THEN WE'LL GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE."
THEY COULDN'T CARE *LESS* FOR SHISHIO'S "CODE."
THE GOVERNMENT'S *PRACTICAL,* THAT WAY.
HŌJI WAS IN DESPAIR.
HE COULDN'T DEFEND HIS LORD.
HE WAS THE CAPTIVE OF A GOV'T SO WEAK AND SHAMEFUL THAT IT WOULD TURN TO ITS ENEMIES FOR STRENGTH.

SO HE TOOK OUT A SMALL BLADE HE'D HIDDEN AND SLIT HIS OWN THROAT.
WITH HIS FINAL STRENGTH, HE WROTE IN BLOOD...
"THIS WORLD IS DEAD TO ME. I GO TO SERVE MY LORD IN HELL."
...AND THEN, HE WAS GONE.

*IN THE LEGAL BROTHELS OF THE DAY KNOWN AS *YŪKAKU*, AN *OIRAN* HELD THE HIGHEST RANK.

I TOOK *PRIDE* IN BEING OIRAN.
I'D CHOSEN THAT LIFE, AND I'D BECOME THE BEST IN IT.
BUSINESS WAS GOOD... BUT THE WORLD WASN'T.
THERE WAS BILE IN MY HEART.
UNTIL THE INCIDENT...
...OF THE *MARIA LUZ*...
MARIA LUZ...!
THE HECK?
ONE DAY, IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF MEIJI, A CHINESE WORKER ESCAPED FROM A PERUVIAN SHIP DOCKED IN YOKOHAMA.
THE SHIP'S NAME WAS *MARIA LUZ*. THE NEW JAPANESE GOV'T WANTED TO BE SEEN AS A CHAMPION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, SO IT DEMANDED THAT PERU RELEASE ITS WORKERS FROM SERVITUDE.
PERU RETORTED THAT JAPAN KEPT WOMEN ENSLAVED IN ITS BROTHELS. THE GOV'T AGREED TO SET THE PROSTITUTES FREE...BUT BALKED AT COMPENSATING THEM FOR THEIR STOLEN FREEDOM. "THEY HAVE LOST THEIR FREEDOM AS HUMAN BEINGS," THE GOV'T DECLARED, "AND SO ARE EQUIVALENT TO LIVESTOCK. NO MONIES CAN BE PAID TO RELEASED CATTLE."

AMUSING, ISN'T IT?
SLAVES ARE HUMAN, BUT PROSTITUTES ARE CATTLE?
WE WHO SUFFER SO MUCH FOR MEN'S PLEASURE...
...ARE WOMEN NO LONGER— BUT COWS!!
OH, HELL NO!!
ピィーッ!
IT ONLY...
...GETS HARDER TO TELL WHO'S RIGHT.
SO THAT'S HOW THE WORLD WORKS, BOY.
YUMI WAS HAPPY TO HAVE MET SHISHIO-SAMA.
NOTHING ELSE...
...WAS CERTAIN.

I'M STARTING TO DEPRESS MYSELF.
I THINK I'LL LEAVE NOW.
コト
OH YEAH. I ALMOST FORGOT.
!
THE TWO WHO GOT AWAY. THEY'RE STILL ON THE LOOSE.
KNOWING "HEAVEN'S SWORD" SŌJIRŌ, HE PROBABLY NEVER WILL BE CAUGHT.
BILL, PLEASE?
御茶屋
HE'S PROBABLY AT SOME TEA SHOP RIGHT NOW, KICKING BACK.
I'M AFRAID I MUST BE GOING.

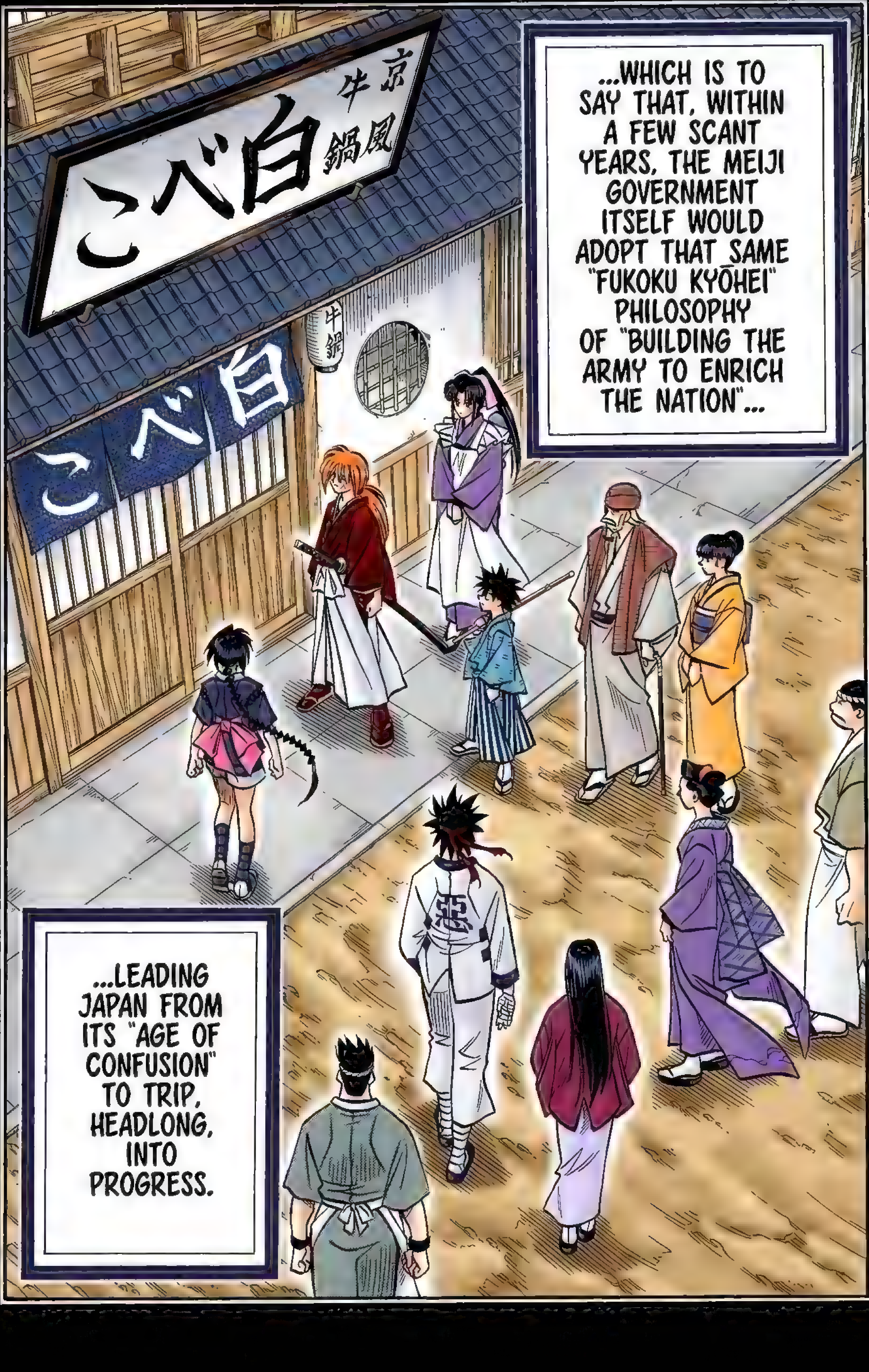
AN' WHERE WOULD THAT BE?
MM... WHERE SHOULD I GO?
I'VE YET TO DECIDE.
I DO THINK I'D LIKE TO WANDER ANOTHER TEN YEARS OR SO...
OH, THAT'S NICE.
TWO MEN WHO ONCE WALKED THE SAME PATH TOOK THAT MUCH TIME...
...TO ARRIVE AT THEIR OWN, INDIVIDUAL TRUTHS. IT SHOULD TAKE ME AT LEAST THAT LONG.
WHERE DOES THIS ROAD LEAD, BY THE WAY?
I DON'T KNOW SO WELL, BUT IT DOES GO NORTH.
NORTH.
THE WEATHER IS GETTING WARM HERE... WHY NOT?

IWANBŌ, NOW, IS TOO STUPID TO BE MUCH HARM BY HIMSELF...
HE CAN BE SAFELY LEFT ALONE.
HUH-HUH.
HUH-HUH.
HUH-HUH.
HOO-HOO...
HOO-HOO-HOO...

CHŌ.
MM?
THE MAN WHO KILLED HIMSELF IN HIS CELL...
WHAT WAS HIS FULL NAME?
LAST NAME... "SADOJIMA," I THINK?

白べこ
京風牛鍋
TELL THE PATRIOTIC SADOJIMA HŌJI AT HIS GRAVE THAT SHISHIO MAKOTO, KOMAGATA YUMI, AND THE REST OF THE JUPPONGATANA...
...MAY NEVER BE RECORDED IN HISTORY, BUT WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN BY THIS ONE, NOT EVER.
NOT SO SURE HE'D BE *HAPPY*, HAVING HIS ENEMY SAY THAT...
びっ
...BUT, SURE, WHATEVER.
HEY, KENSHIN...
WE DID WIN, RIGHT?
I MEAN... THAT MEANS OUR WAY IS *RIGHT*, RIGHT?
IF YOU THINK MIGHT MAKES RIGHT, YOU'RE THINKING LIKE SHISHIO.
WHAT'S RIGHT WILL BE RECORDED IN HISTORY AND PASSED ALONG TO FUTURE GENERA-TIONS.
ALL WE CAN DO IS KEEP FIGHTING FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE IN.

WHICH IS NOT TO SAY THAT A CODE IN WHICH THE *WEAK*...
...ARE THE FOOD OF THE *STRONG*...
...CAN *EVER* BE RIGHT, IN THIS ONE'S BELIEF.


白べこ
京風 牛鍋
牛鍋
白べこ
悪
...WHICH IS TO SAY THAT, WITHIN A FEW SCANT YEARS, THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT ITSELF WOULD ADOPT THAT SAME "FUKOKU KYŌHEI" PHILOSOPHY OF "BUILDING THE ARMY TO ENRICH THE NATION"...
...LEADING JAPAN FROM ITS "AGE OF CONFUSION" TO TRIP, HEADLONG, INTO PROGRESS.

IS THIS A DREAM?
...SOME TRICK...
...OR REALITY ?
SADOJIMA HŌJI AWAKES TO FIND HIMSELF...
...WHERE ...?
I... DIED... DIDN'T I...?
THEN... THIS MUST BE?

HELL, OF COURSE.
!
SHISHIO-SAMA!!
SEE? JUST AS I SAID.
WAIT A BIT, AND HŌJI WAS *BOUND* TO TURN UP.
ENOUGH WASTING TIME!
WE MUST BE GOING.
GOING? WHERE?

WHERE ELSE?
WE'RE OFF TO CONQUER OUR ENVIRONMENT!
I KEEP THINKING WE'LL SEE USUI, TOO...
THIS TIME, LET'S TRULY MAKE HIM ONE OF US.
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
WHY DO YOU HOLD BACK?
DID I NOT SAY YOU WOULD FIRST ENJOY THE TASTE OF MY VICTORY...?
Y-YOU DID!
I'M COMING!!

HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!!
NYAH, HA, HAH...
AH-H-H, HA, HAH...
HA, HA, HAH...
THAT WORLD COULD NOT STOMACH MY DEFEAT OF BATTŌSAI. BUT HERE...
...HERE, THEY'RE OUR KIND OF PEOPLE.

DIGITAL
SHUEISHA JUMP COMICS

デジタルカラー版
るろうに剣心
17巻

和月伸宏
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